

MEDICAL PERSONNEL, PROVIDE SCHOLARSHIPS FOR  
(DOD 83-260)

Dear Mr. Speaker:

There is forwarded herewith a draft of legislation, "To facilitate the procurement of doctors of medicine and doctors of dentistry for the Armed Forces by providing scholarships for education in medical and dental professions, and for other purposes."

This proposal is a part of the Department of Defense Legislative Program for 1954, and it has been approved by the Bureau of the Budget. The Department of the Army has been designated as the representative of the Department of Defense for this legislation. It is recommended that this proposal be enacted by the Congress.

Purpose of the Legislation

The purpose of the proposed legislation is to facilitate the long-range procurement of physicians and dentists as career officers in the military services by providing scholarships for education in the medical and dental professions to be administered under regulations prescribed by the Secretary of Defense.

Current methods of procurement of career officers in the fields of medicine and dentistry are not sufficiently productive to replace career officers lost by attrition and to reach authorized strengths. For example, current yearly losses in regular medical officers are exceeding gains despite the operation of military intern and residency programs and other active direct procurement programs. At this time there is an over-all shortage of approximately 2300 regular medical officers in the three military departments. A comparable situation exists in respect to regular dental officers. As a result of these deficiencies the number of these professional personnel in the regular components of the military departments is insufficient to insure the basic necessities of the military medical and dental functions for the authorized regular military establishment. Another result of this shortage has been the necessity to bring larger numbers of physicians and dentists to duty involuntarily through operation of the "doctor draft" law, not only to compensate for troop strength increases due to the existing national emergency but in addition to balance the deficit that should be filled by regular officers. The impact of these levies in withdrawing professional personnel from civilian pursuits has decreased medical and dental services available to civilians throughout the nation.

The proposed legislation provides a voluntary scholarship plan

for selected students in medical and dental schools. Participants would be paid a monthly retainer fee to cover a part of their personal expenses incident to school attendance. Schools would be paid an amount to cover the usual tuition, fees and laboratory expenses.

In return for scholarship participation, after graduation each student is required to serve one calendar year on active duty for each academic year of participation with a minimum of three years of active duty, and may obtain a commission as a regular medical or dental officer. The proposed legislation provides that a scholarship participant, upon reimbursement to the Government of all funds expended in his behalf, may be released from the scholarship program prior to graduation. Subsequent to graduation and after serving three years of active duty, he may be relieved of any additional obligation for active duty agreed to under this program upon reimbursement to the Government of all funds expended in his behalf.

Based on allocated strengths and existing shortages of career medical and dental officers in the military departments, it is tentatively proposed to offer sufficient scholarships through this means to provide a maximum of 300 graduates from schools of medicine and 126 graduates from schools of dentistry at the end of the second year of operation of the plan, and the same number of graduates each year thereafter to provide gradual increments until allocated strengths are reached. It is estimated that under the best of circumstances the program will be operative for ten years at these numbers.

Cost and Budget Data

To maintain the number of scholarship participants mentioned above and based upon present tuition rates, it is estimated that the maximum cost that would result from the enactment of this proposal would be approximately \$2,542,000 the first year of operation. It is further estimated that the cost of the second and succeeding years would not exceed \$3,389,000 per year. The cost could not be absorbed in presently planned Department of Defense appropriations.

Sincerely yours,

Inclosure

Honorable Joseph W. Martin, Jr.

Speaker of the House of Representatives